

## Ecological Identity in Governor Babatunde Fashola's Speeches on the Environment

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### **Abstract**

*Given the paucity of linguistics-focused scholarship on environmental issues in Africa, this study examines some speeches of Governor Babatunde Fashola as purposively selected across the eight years of his tenure in Lagos State from 29 May 2007 to 29 May 2015. As a government deemed to have been one of the more 'progressive' since the advent of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, the Fashola administration was believed to have rated well on the anecdotal indices of infrastructural development. The government was also credited with bringing new thinking to governance, especially in relation to the environment. As such, in an ecological analysis of discourse, this study aims to identify the extent to which the government was ecocentric by highlighting the discursive strategies adopted in the speeches for creating a positive ecological identity for both the governor and his executive cabinet. Via qualitative content analysis, augmented with quantitative queries from WordSmith Tools 7.0, the study identifies the following discursive strategies: the governor as acknowledger of anthropogenic climate change, promoter of green governmentality, being knowledgeable about the environmental crisis, problem solver, responsible blame taker on behalf of humankind, nature-minded 'earthophile', business-minded 'earthophile', guardian of posterity through visionary action, and a conservationist. Owing to the ideological clash between concern for profit and care for the environment, as evident in the data samples, the paper argues that the speeches reflect an 'ecoparadox' in which economic growth gets primacy over environmentalism. Consequent upon these, the paper concludes that the framing of climate change in governmental discourse needs to transcend valuing the nonhuman world only extrinsically.*

**Keywords:** *Eco-critical discourse analysis; Ecology; Environment; Identity; Babatunde Fashola; Ecoparadox.*

## **1. Introduction**

It is perhaps safe to claim that no other issue is as fundamental to human survival and as politically charged today as the environmental issue, otherwise called the climate change crisis. Across the world, this problem manifests as disturbed weather patterns that lead to unprecedented flooding as well as abnormal spells of drought, freezing temperatures and heatwaves. A major consequence of this disturbance in the natural environment is loss of biodiversity as ecosystems lose their balance and dynamism, leading to threats to human survival. Prior to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there had been little apprehension about the state of the natural environment. However, as scientists and social theorists and researchers looked more closely, they began to notice a negative systematic alteration of the humanity-nature relationship. Developing alongside the body of scholarship and commentary on this crisis was political cynicism in some quarters as to the validity of the research claims on the problem and the approaches to solving it. In some cases, there was outright denial that the problem existed at all, just as there were claims and counterclaims as to the human role in it all (see, for example, Antonio & Brulle, 2011; Boykoff, 2008; Brulle, 2014; Corner, 2013; Kahan, 2012; Klein, 2014). Within the fields of Linguistics and Environmental Communication, much useful work has emerged on the impact of language on human behaviour towards the natural environment. Within Linguistics, the subfield of Ecolinguistics began to appear in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to link ecological and linguistic concerns. In that light, this paper contributes to ecolinguistic scholarship by probing for the presence or otherwise of an ecological vision in the political speeches of a Nigerian state governor.

After this introduction, the rest of the paper is organised as follows. The second section examines what is known as the ‘ecological turn’ in social theory/research and linguistics by highlighting some relevant works in both Ecolinguistics and Environmental Communication. Given particular attention in the paper are studies on the link between identity construction in relation to framings and responses to the environmental crisis. The third section offers a brief

description of the theoretical framework of Eco-critical Discourse Analysis (EcDA), in addition to specifying the methodology of Qualitative Content Analysis in qualitative research. The section also describes the data and explains the sampling procedure for selecting the speeches. From a Digital Humanities perspective, there is equally a brief description of the augmentative capacity of WordSmith Tools 7.0 for further qualitative data analysis. In the fourth section, the discursive strategies for doing ecological identity are outlined and illustrated with relevant clauses and clause complexes. Furthermore, in section five, there is additional analysis of the corpus based on concordance queries fed into WordSmith Tools 7.0, especially in relation to *global warming* and *climate change*. Finally, the paper concludes with discussions and implications of the findings of the ecoparadox that typifies the ecological ambivalence in the Governor's environmental rhetoric.

## **2. The Ecological Turn and Ecolinguistics**

In a work that blends insights from theoretical and empirical work in social theory and sociology, Middlemiss (2014) examines the implications of identity individualisation in late-modern society against the ideal of participation as advocated in sustainable development theory and practice. After explaining the problematic nature of individualisation for sustainable development, she calls for "unpacking how such a threat might be countered through better policy and practice" (p. 930). Middlemiss' major preoccupation is to show the problems involved in how late-modern industrialisation, urbanisation and consumerism lead to shifts in identity that in turn cause people in consumerist societies to avoid participation or collective action on the environment. Citing literature that reports a privileging of the 'I-identity' over the 'we-identity', Middlemiss notes that much of the social theory literature on sustainable development assumes the existence of an "idealised participatory subject" (*Ibid.*, p. 935) who may not in fact exist. The implication of this, she argues, is that the complexities of late-modern subjectivities are ignored and true civic participation fails to emerge since theory and policy place too much stress on individualisation. Although Middlemiss' work is not explicitly linguistic, it is relevant to the present study for its environmental communication dimension.

Regarding the place of identity in ecological contexts, Stibbe (2015) remains a very insightful, impactful work. Stibbe lists eight ‘stories’ that he believes – and convincingly demonstrates – influence how people think, talk and act in relation to the environment. One of these stories is identity – “a story about what it means to be a particular kind of person” (2015, p. 17). Using this concept of stories, Stibbe shows with a variety of data how different people position themselves on environmental matters, especially in terms of the products they consume and how they frame their personalities to reflect commitment to the “‘green’ character”. As some of the works on identity and environmental framing show, people and organisations record differing levels of success in their efforts to do ecological identity (e.g. Bland, 2014; Harré, Brockmeier, & Mühlhäuser, 1999; Hogben, 2009; Slater, 2007; Stibbe, 2004; Wąsikiewicz-Firlej, 2017). With reference to the corpus for the present study, Stibbe’s story of identity has potential to illuminate the level of ecological identity work done by Governor Fashola during his time as executive helmsman in the Lagos State Government.

Drawing their data from the virtual world, Poole and Spangler (2019) analyse Nintendo’s simulation game *Animal Crossing: New Leaf* (2012) seeking to determine whether the game encourages ecocentric behaviour or normalises ecologically disruptive habits. Noting that the game’s goal is for the player to secure good Happy Home and Perfect Town scores, the authors observe that such a game has good potential for creating or sustaining particular identities through the environmental tasks performed within the gaming space. Significantly, they notice the subtle promotion of anthropocentrism and consumerism in the game, as the human avatars seem to get far more prominence than the non-human ones while both the human and non-human characters are presented as positively evaluating the crave for possessing more material goods, even if via constant borrowing. With regard to the game’s promotion of recycling as positive ecological action, the authors argue that recycling is undertaken only as a way to find the funds for further materialist indulgence. Moreover, regarding the anthropocentrism present in the game design, the authors deplore the relation of dominion and distance between the player avatar and the nonhuman characters, thus promoting a human-nature duality. Also critiqued is the idea that ‘resources’ exist *ad infinitum* in the game space, as fish and insects can be caught and sold at any time

for money, which may even grow on trees. The authors therefore conclude that “Repeatedly, the game reflects and normalizes the world beyond the simulation and presents the non-human animal identities and the practices each performs as normal and non-problematic.” While not all of the authors’ other criticisms may be justified, those noted here actually typify the most common instances of how human thinking affects the environment. To that extent, the paper is especially insightful for drawing attention to a data source for the *ecological analysis of discourse* (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014) that would otherwise be ignored.

In the light of findings in environmental communication, place studies and discourse analysis, Horsbøl (2019) investigates the nature of contemporary ‘green conflicts’ as people in different regions of the world embark on the ‘green transition’ that is deemed to be key to human-nature sustainability. With a special focus on news media coverage of conflicts arising from wind turbine construction in Denmark, Horsbøl conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the reasons advanced by local residents for opposing specific on-land and offshore energy projects. The study identified six topoi around which “protest voices” (p. 2) emerged on the projects: health, nuisance, resident economy, landscape, animal life, and democracy. Of these six, landscape and animal life were specific “green concerns” (p. 1) but equally significant was the potential nuisance to be caused by noise from the turbines, as well as the blot on the natural landscape that it was believed they would constitute. Although Horsbøl’s analysis is richly nuanced with regard to answering the questions posed for the study, the more momentous aspect of the findings for the present study is the identity dimension wherein local residents are framed as sufficiently knowledgeable about environmental issues as to engage in ‘discursive conflict’ with project promoters and government.

### **3. Eco-critical Discourse Analysis (EcDA)**

This study adopts the theoretical framework of Eco-critical Discourse Analysis (EcDA), which is a version of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that focuses on the environment. As one of the strands of Ecolinguistics, EcDA is thought to have its origins in Michael Halliday’s talk at the 1990 edition of the Applied Linguistics Association international conference, held in Thessaloniki, Greece. In

his presentation, Halliday had focused on the tendency of language to predispose people to behaving in certain environmentally unhelpful ways. Halliday argued that for the most part people tend to be unaware, for example, that their wasteful use of natural resources such as water and oil might be the result of regarding them to be infinite, as the grammar of English seems to suggest in deeming them ‘uncountable’ (Halliday 1990). Like CDA itself, EcDA undertakes both grammatical analysis (for the level of *description*) and ideological analysis (for the levels of *explanation* and *interpretation*). As such, EcDA is *ecological* analysis of discourse that seeks to plumb the depths of rhetoric and action in relation to the environment (Alexander & Stibbe 2014). Quite often, there is an overlap between work in environmental communication and work in Ecolinguistics. More specifically, however, the former field tends to describe the *analysis* of ecological discourse, since it hardly involves detailed *linguistic* analysis.

### **3.1. Methodology: Qualitative Content Analysis in Qualitative Research**

As an instance of work in the analysis of discourse, which is language use above the sentence that is often domain-bound, this study mainly utilises Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). In this case, the domain of discourse is politics with imbrications on the economy and the environment. Accordingly, data for the study were selected from among the public speeches given by Governor Babatunde Fashola of Nigeria’s southwestern state of Lagos during his tenure as Executive helmsman between 29 May 2007 and 29 May 2015. Such apparently monological speeches are one of the sources of data for discourse analysis within the qualitative research paradigm. As Antaki (2008) notes, such data may be drawn from “Official and unofficial texts, speeches, media accounts and representations, [and] interviews” (p. 432). For ten Have (2004), qualitative research involves fishing out “hidden meanings, non-obvious features, multiple interpretations, implied connotations, unheard voices” with a view to providing “complex descriptions” while trying “to explicate webs of meaning” (p.5). While political speeches mark using the ‘document’ style of doing qualitative research, ten Have further observes, other traditional styles of qualitative research are interviews and ethnography (pp. 5-7). In line with the principles of qualitative research, then, the study deploys qualitative content analysis to critically assess

environmentally significant propositions in selected clauses and clause complexes in the speeches.

### 3.2. Sampling Procedure and Data Description

For the larger study from which this paper derives a total of 100 speeches were purposively selected among the several hundred presented by Governor Babatunde Fashola during his eight-year tenure as the topmost executive political actor in Nigeria's Lagos State. While the selected speeches were given in different discursive contexts, e.g. agriculture, culture/tourism, economy/business, politics, education/development, environment, and health, etc., data for the present paper come from the discursive fields of health and environment. For the purpose of this study, the 11 speeches make up a corpus, though a small one. Table 1 below provides a description of the speeches in terms of their coding, date and titles.

**Table 1: Description of Data**

| S/N | CODE  | DATE     | SPEECH TITLE   |
|-----|-------|----------|--|
| 1   | HTH1  | 07-11-07 | The 2007 Safety Week Celebration of The Sheraton Lagos Hotel & Towers, Ikeja                                       |
| 2   | ENV1  | 20-03-08 | Official Launch of The Climate Change Club (CCC) in Lagos State Public Schools Under The School Advocacy Programme |
| 3   | ENV2  | 14-07-09 | 2009 Edition of Tree Planting Day  |
| 4   | ENV3  | 30-09-09 | Thinking Globally Acting Locally: Governors' Global Climate Summit 2   |
| 5   | ENV4  | 14-07-10 | Second Anniversary of Tree Planting  |
| 6   | ENV5  | 10-04-12 | 4th Lagos State Climate Change Summit  |
| 7   | ENV6  | 29-01-13 | Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission's Distinguished Visitors Programme                                      |
| 8   | ENV7  | 14-05-13 | Launch of The Lagos Power Kids Club  |
| 9   | ENV8  | 13-06-13 | 5th Anniversary of Climate Change Clubs in Lagos Schools   |
| 10  | ENV9  | 14-07-14 | 2014 Edition of Tree Planting Day  |
| 11  | ENV10 | 21-04-15 | 7th Lagos State Climate Change Summit  |

### **3.3. WordSmith Tools 7.0 as Augmentative Digital Humanities Tool**

Created by Mike Scott, WordSmith Tools 7.0 is paid software that first came into use in 1996. It is “an integrated suite of programs for looking at how words behave in texts” (Scott 2019: 2). Among its many tools are Concord, KeyWords, WordList and a large number of utility programs. As a computer application for highlighting key features of verbal text, WordSmith Tools 7.0 offer query results that augment the ‘manual’ analysis of the corpus. To limit the description to the specific tool used in this paper, the Concord queries allow for the identification of other insightful clauses and clause complexes in the corpus that promote the LSG’s overall ecological identity.

## **4. Data Presentation and Analysis**

The study found a few discursive strategies by which the governor sought to present a plausible ecological identity for himself and his government. In some of the more scientifically informed speeches, e.g. ENV23, ENV24 and ENV31, it is easy to evaluate the governor as reliable considering his persistent reference to scientific authority. The major discursive strategies are thus identified and highlighted below.

### **4.1. The Governor as Acknowledger of Anthropogenic Climate Change**

1. *There is overwhelming evidence that most of the global warming over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities* which have altered the chemical composition of the atmosphere through the buildup of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon monoxide, methane and nitrous oxide. HTH1

In one of the speeches given in his first six months in office, Governor Fashola uses clause complex [1] above to identify himself and his administration as an acknowledger of anthropogenic climate change. Coming at a time when it appeared that the climate change crisis had not become very visible to his fellow governors, the Governor’s acceptance of human fault on the troubling state of the environment would seem to have him stood him out. Reflecting evidence of some familiarity with climate change science, the Governor here not only refers to post-Rachel Carson observations on the state of the earth but



also unrelenting human action that remains detrimental to collective species survival. His reference, therefore, to greenhouse gases such as carbon monoxide, methane and nitrous oxide may be described as indicating currency of knowledge on the climate challenge.

#### **4.2. The Governor as Promoter of Green Governmentality**

In clause [2] below, Governor Fashola presents his government as a campaigner for change in human action towards the environment by declaring July 14 as ‘Tree Planting Day’ in Lagos State as part of efforts to check climate change:

2. *Today, we are once again fulfilling the pledge of our Administration to institutionalize the tree planting campaign by declaring the 14th of July every year as a tree planting day in Lagos State.* ENV2

Via the policy of green governmentality, the administration began a tree planting campaign as a way to mitigate the loss of biodiversity in an economy focused on achieving economic growth and development. In the social theory literature the concept of environmentality or green governmentality, deriving from Foucauldian discourse analysis, refers to the use of institutionalised regulation in restorative environmental action (e.g. Luke 1999; Rutherford 2007, 2017; Strippel & Buckley 2013).

An extension of this regime of governmentality is the Lagos State Annual Climate Change Summit, as well as the creation of the Climate Change Club and the Energy Kids Club in Lagos State public schools:

3. *Today's official launch of the Climate Change Club (CCC) in Lagos State public schools marks another milestone in our journey towards a cleaner, healthier, sustainable and disciplined society.* ENV1

Thus, with regard to the Climate Change Club, Governor Fashola uses clause [3] above to announce his government's latest step in checking environmental degradation. With the launch of these clubs, the administration hoped to inspire the younger generation with ideas that would help them to relate less adversarially with the nonhuman world.

#### **4.3. The Governor as Knowledgeable about the Environmental Crisis**

Having first established himself as an acknowledger of anthropogenic climate change, Governor Fashola discursively elaborates on this identity by setting himself aside from climate change deniers *and* asserting himself as a competent knower who is aware of the impact of the climate crisis. Thus, in clause complex [4] below, the Governor not only uses a grammatical modality that signals his own acceptance of global warming, but also implies that other people have unproblematically accepted the ‘reality’ of climate change.

4. *The danger of Global Warming is now a common knowledge with its attendant rise on water bodies – oceans, seas, lagoons, and rivers which have resulted in flood ravaging the globe.* ENV2

To speak of *the danger of global warming* in the first place is to make an existential assumption that is triggered by the definite article ‘the’, meaning that not only does global warming exist but it is also a source of danger. Moreover, the Governor asserts that not only is global warming dangerous but also “common knowledge”, although climate change deniers are unlikely to agree with him.

In clause [5] below, the Governor again mentions the role of greenhouse gases in the climate change crisis when he notes thus:

5. *Global warming is caused by emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere thus depleting the ozone layer.* ENV2

Given the modality of clause [5] – the passive verbal group “is caused” – the Governor portrays himself as being certain about the cause of global warming, thus asserting himself as a competent knower before his audience.

#### **4.4. The Governor as Problem Solver**

Further to claiming the identity of a competent knower, the Governor portrays his government as having effective long-term solutions for the climate crisis. Following the strategy of governmentality, then, the solutions proposed include the yearly tree planting campaign and the

entrenchment of the Energy Kids Club as well as the Climate Change Club in Lagos State public schools.

6. *This exercise, designed to strengthen our tree planting advocacy, is part of the various steps taken by this Administration to combat global warming and regenerate the environment for healthy living.* ENV2

This, in clause complex [6] above, also taken from ENV2 like clause complex [4] and clause [5], the Governor notifies his audience of government's aim in starting "our tree planting advocacy", which is "to combat global warming and regenerate the environment for healthy living."

In clause complex [7], also taken from ENV2, the Governor is as much concerned about how to sustainably meet the needs of the present generation as he is about how to leave posterity an equally habitable Earth:

7. *... we have a duty to preserve nature by planting more trees so that the next generation can get wood for homes, schools, hospitals, furniture, books and so much more.* ENV2

Of course, from an anthropocentric perspective it is clear that clause complex [7] above suggests that the Governor still views the nonhuman world in instrumental terms. In clause complex [8] below, the Governor re-asserts his focus on posterity when he discloses as follows:

8. *We have also initiated our catch-them young policy in our schools by starting an Energy Kids Club in each of the 20 Clubs that win the Governor's Annual Education Award....* ENV6

Taken from ENV6, clause complex [8] restates the reason for establishing the Energy Kids Club in schools: teaching the younger generation the virtue of preservation and conservation. Similarly, in clause [9], the Governor describes creation of the Climate Change

Club in schools as part of global measures to mitigate the impact of the environmental crisis on humans:

9. *The climate change club came about as part of our collective global adaptation and mitigation response towards environmental challenges confronting humanity.* ENV8

No doubt, then, the audience is encouraged to see the administration as not only aware of the crisis but also working assiduously to stem the tide of damage.

#### **4.5. The Governor as Responsible Blame Taker on Behalf of Humankind**

Furthermore, the Governor not only acknowledges the many dimensions of anthropogenic climate change but also accepts the blame, on behalf of humankind, for current unsustainable practices. In clause [10] below, he links meeting “our human needs” with “continuing to hurt mother earth and endangering our lives in the process”:

10. The challenge we face is coming up with ways of meeting our human needs *without continuing to hurt mother earth and endangering our lives in the process.* ENV2

Consequently, the responsibility for action to save the planet belongs to humans (“The challenge we face is coming up with ways”).

Even more openly, in clause complex [11], the Governor directly accuses humans of being guilty of “endangering the planet” despite being just one among many species on the face of the earth:

11. Nevertheless it became manifest that *even if we cannot fully populate the planet we are, from our far removed locations, collectively endangering the planet.* ENV3

Implicit in the above is the assumption that humans may never be able to utilise the earth’s resources fully – “even if we cannot fully populate the planet” – thus justifying present unsustainable practices.

#### **4.6. The Governor as Nature-Minded *Earthophile***

In some instances, the Governor claims the identity of a nature-minded ‘earthophile’, that is, an environmentally knowledgeable citizen of the world who is committed (‘work[s] assiduously’) to preserving the intrinsic value of natural habitats and their species. From ENV2, clause [12] and clause complex [13] announce this focus. While [12] declares a general environmental aim for government’s actions:

12. *Our administration will continue to work assiduously to protect the present and future generations from the scourge of global warming and Climate Change.* ENV2

Clause complex [13] cites giving special salience to the welfare of trees as a specific policy move in this direction:

13. *This exercise is continuous and we shall continue to do everything within the ambit of the law to protect the existing trees and plant more.* ENV2

In the above excerpt, the Governor appears to display intrinsic interest in the welfare of trees, since he does not say anything about their use value for humans.

#### **4.7. The Governor as Business-Minded *Earthophile***

Nevertheless – and clearly contradictorily – the Governor’s subscription to the ideology of economic growthism soon manifests in the identity of a business-minded ‘earthophile’ who must, one way or another, profit from ecological action. The administration’s pro-business stance is therefore obvious in clause complex [14] and clause [15] below. In [14] he speaks of “the positive impact of the tree planting and beautification programme” being “the almost unquantifiable economic benefit” that the state has reportedly witnessed:

14. *Of course another positive impact of the tree planting and beautification programme is the almost unquantifiable economic benefit at a micro level that it has unleashed in our State.* ENV4

In the excerpt above, it is hard not to notice the Governor's bias for making profit while acting to protect the environment, as he talks about "the almost unquantifiable economic benefit" of such ecological intervention.

And when he talks of planting "a tree a day" in the underlined clause [15] below, he seems more interested in the economic benefits of doing so, as the information structure of the expression left-branches "plant a tree a day" (given information) and right-branches "to create jobs for the unemployed" (new information):

15. Plant a tree a day for cleaner air, plant a tree a day for environmental protection against erosion and flooding, *plant a tree a day to create jobs for the unemployed.*  
ENV4

It is also very significant that the underlined clause appears as part of a three-part statement in which the final item gets the most emphasis, as if to further highlight the LSG's focus on human concerns. This observation is confirmed by clause [16] below:

16. *Plant a tree for the social, environmental and economic well being of Lagos.* ENV4

wherein the environment is sandwiched between the social and economic needs of humans.

#### **4.8. The Governor as Guardian of Posterity through Visionary Action**

Another aspect of the Governor's ecological identity is that of 'guardian of posterity through visionary action.' Here the Lagos State Government's (LSG henceforth) actions in green governmentality are meant to not only mitigate current effects of climate change but also to raise a new generation of environmentally conscious citizens who will, hopefully, behave far more responsibly and respectfully towards nature than the present generation. Clause [17], already cited as clause [3] under green governmentality:

17. *Today's official launch of the Climate Change Club (CCC) in Lagos State public schools marks another milestone in our journey towards a cleaner, healthier, sustainable and disciplined society.* ENV2

thus announces an epochal moment in the LSG's initiation of a process that will lead to long-term attitudinal change, that is, launch of the Climate Change Club (CCC) whose membership is constituted by the youth.

In clause complex [18] the Governor takes pride in being the head of the first government in Nigeria to act towards nature-intrinsic ends:

18. *I am happy to be the head of a Government that first took very clear and positive action in Nigeria to protect the environment and create parks, gardens and also plant trees.* ENV9

And in clause [19] the impact of the CCC is already being projected:

19. *Our Climate Change Clubs in our schools are targeting and successfully attracting the next generation to sustainable environmental habits that will help them adapt better than we have done.* ENV10

In the LSG's thinking, by the time today's children have become adults they would have acquired a level of sustainability literacy that would help them to conserve earth's resources not only for the present but also for the future.

#### **4.9. The Governor as a Conservationist**

A final crucial aspect of the LSG's ecological identity is that of conservationist. Here the governor advocates token actions that ultimately help to reduce individual contributions to global warming via the release of carbon dioxide and other ozone-depleting gases. Thus, clauses and clause complexes [20-25] name specific ways by which Lagosians could take ecological action.

20. *Use less of your air conditioner and bring energy levels down.* ENV5

In clause complex [20] above the Governor advises people to use their air conditioners less, most likely as a way of preventing the spread of ozone-depleting substances into the atmosphere.

21. *Use energy saving bulbs where you can instead of the ones that burn out quicker and consume more energy.*  
ENV7

In clause complex [21] above the Governor encourages people to use energy-saving bulbs.

22. *We should all reuse paper and recycle whenever we can.* ENV7

As to the use of paper in offices and homes, he suggests reuse and recycling in clause complex [22] above. Similarly, in clause [23] below, he asks people not to waste water:

23. *We should save water by ensuring your taps are turned off completely after use.* ENV7

And to ensure that the next generation imbibes such ideas, the Governor disclosed in a speech given in July 2014, less than a year before leaving office:

24. So what we have done is *to develop top ten Energy saving tips specifically for children* and print posters to be placed in every Lagos State Secondary school. ENV7

Some of the ten energy tips include saving water and recycling as well as reusing products.

In the final clause complexes and clause selected, however, the LSG silently slips in its commitment to the money economy. In clause complex [25] the Governor cites the personal example of his own workplace, the Lagos State Government House, which is already saving costs by using energy-saving bulbs:

25. *The whole of Alausa Secretariat and the old Secretariat have been retrofitted with energy saving bulbs* and we are



already seeing *the results of savings to tax payers in how much we pay for electricity*. ENV7

When the Governor ends one of his last speeches on the note below [clause 26]:

26. Our message is simple: *conserve energy, save money*. ECB10

the audience is very likely to assume that conserving energy, indeed engaging in ecological action of any kind, should be about earning or saving money.

### 5. Querying the Corpus: Results from WordSmith Tools 7.0

To augment the analysis, the speeches are further probed with WordSmith Tools 7.0. Figure 1 below is the result for the WordSmith concordance query on the phrase *global warming* in the 11-speech corpus. The phrase appears in HTH1 (2 tokens), ENV1 (5 tokens), ENV2 (6 tokens), ENV5 (6 tokens) and ENV9 (1 token), totaling 20. Concordance line 7, for instance, directs the reader to a clause complex in ENV2 where the Governor describes the Climate Change Clubs as “growing from strength to strength” and making children in Lagos “effective partners with us in the effort to contain global warming.” Similarly, concordance line 13 leads to a clause complex in ENV5: “Most of us are sadly just waking up to the reality of global warming and climate change, and far too many more of us are still blissfully ignorant.” Here, the Governor is mildly criticising those who had been ignorant about the climate change crisis. In fact, in the preceding clause in the text of ENV5, the Governor reports, “But the years of denial have cost us” – in an intertextual reference to the claims of climate change deniers. Interestingly, a hit on concordance line 1 leads to a clause in ENV1 where the LSG claims to have begun a “crusade against global warming” and “has taken fundamental steps towards addressing the release of Ozone depleting substances into the atmosphere in the area of waste management.”

**Figure 1: WordSmith Concordance Query on *global warming***

| N  | Concordance   | Set | Tag | Word # | Sent  | Para  | Para  | H...  | H...  | Sect  | Sect  | File                  |
|----|---|-----|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
|    |   |     |     | # Pos  | # Pos | # Pos | # Pos | # Pos | # Pos | # Pos | # Pos |                       |
| 1  | Lagos State Government in its crusade <b>against global warming</b> has taken fundamental steps                   |     |     | 1,692  | 70    | 10    | 01..1 |       | 01..1 |       |       | 2 ENV1 20 2019De      |
| 2  | are sounding warnings that climate change <b>and global warming</b> are real, and that we cannot                  |     |     | 1,826  | 87    | 15    | 01..5 |       | 01..5 |       |       | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019De  |
| 3  | , we must take the indices of climate change <b>and global warming seriously</b> . The climate is defined         |     |     | 712    | 28    | 21    | 0711  |       | 0711  |       |       | 2 ENV1 20 2019De      |
| 4  | to the emission of greenhouse gases <b>and global warming</b> - Use less of your air conditioner                  |     |     | 1,624  | 73    | 33    | 01..3 |       | 01..3 |       |       | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019De  |
| 5  | in the shape of climate change brought about <b>by global warming</b> . This is now beyond doubt or               |     |     | 408    | 12    | 20    | 0407  |       | 0407  |       |       | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019De  |
| 6  | steps taken by this Administration to <b>combat global warming</b> and regenerate the environment for             |     |     | 65     | 1     | 23    | 0 64  |       | 0 64  |       |       | 3 ENV2 14 JULY 2019De |
| 7  | are effective partners with us in the effort to <b>contain global warming</b> . One of the commendable efforts in |     |     | 730    | 27    | 31    | 0729  |       | 0729  |       |       | 3 ENV2 14 JULY 2019De |
| 8  | of unwholesome human activities <b>engendering global warming</b> . My dear students, you are from                |     |     | 2,388  | 90    | 101   | 01..7 |       | 01..7 |       |       | 2 ENV1 20 2019De      |
| 9  | <b>which have resulted in flood ravaging the globe. Global warming is caused by emission of green</b>             |     |     | 193    | 7     | 2     | 0 192 |       | 0 192 |       |       | 3 ENV2 14 JULY 2019De |
| 10 | present and future generations from the scourge of <b>global warming</b> and Climate Change. The Climate          |     |     | 696    | 26    | 20    | 0 695 |       | 0 695 |       |       | 3 ENV2 14 JULY 2019De |
| 11 | a Climate Change Summit to discuss the effects of <b>global warming</b> and climate change, and proffer           |     |     | 33     | 0     | 32    | 0 32  |       | 0 32  |       |       | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019De  |
| 12 | come in contact with anywhere on the danger of <b>global warming</b> and ways of preventing it •                  |     |     | 2,757  | 98    | 78    | 01..6 |       | 01..6 |       |       | 2 ENV1 20 2019De      |
| 13 | Most of us are sadly just waking up to the reality of <b>global warming</b> and climate change, and far too       |     |     | 496    | 17    | 14    | 0 495 |       | 0 495 |       |       | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019De  |
| 14 | our survival on this planet because the threat of <b>global warming</b> and climate change is now                 |     |     | 108    | 4     | 18    | 0 107 |       | 0 107 |       |       | 10 ENV9 14 JUL 2019De |
| 15 | and know what they can do to mitigate the effects of <b>global warming</b> . Every one of us can play a part in   |     |     | 1,535  | 69    | 20    | 01..4 |       | 01..4 |       |       | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019De  |
| 16 | of windstorm and hazards of nature. The danger of <b>Global Warming</b> is now a common knowledge with            |     |     | 166    | 6     | 5     | 0 165 |       | 0 165 |       |       | 3 ENV2 14 JULY 2019De |
| 17 | to every individual, especially with the effects of <b>global warming</b> on the earth's surface and a            |     |     | 74     | 2     | 28    | 0 73  |       | 0 73  |       |       | 1 HTH1 7 NOV 2019De   |
| 18 | efforts in this regard is the educative film on <b>global warming</b> produced by our school children             |     |     | 745    | 28    | 15    | 0 744 |       | 0 744 |       |       | 3 ENV2 14 JULY 2019De |
| 19 | . There is overwhelming evidence that most of the <b>global warming</b> over the last 50 years is attributable    |     |     | 263    | 9     | 10    | 0 262 |       | 0 262 |       |       | 1 HTH1 7 NOV 2019De   |
| 20 | unhealthy behaviors and practices that contribute to <b>global warming</b> and dangerous climate change.          |     |     | 549    | 22    | 35    | 0 548 |       | 0 548 |       |       | 2 ENV1 20 2019De      |

Similarly, the concordance query for *climate change* produced 75 tokens, distributed across eight of the speeches (see Table 2 below). In concordance line 16, the Governor refers to humans' ability to unite in solving the problem of climate change: "A global challenge, as unprecedented as climate change, will test humanity's capacity to solve shared problems as never before" (ENV2). From ENV8, concordance line 6 yields the clause "Their [children] energy, inquisitiveness and enthusiasm are critical to the fight against climate change", a statement made during the Governor's address at the fifth anniversary of the Climate Change Clubs in Lagos schools. As already observed, enlisting the next generation in the crusade against climate change is one of the strategies by which the LSG hopes to commit to ecological action.

Regarding the advocacy for tree planting, the Governor says in ENV9 that "It is a serious matter that underpins our survival on this planet because the threat of global warming and climate change is now undebatable," thereby reaffirming himself as a competent knower about the effects of climate change as well as a responsible solution provider. To assure the audience of his competence on the matter in question, the Governor states thus in ENV3, as shown in concordance line 15:

The adverse effects on the ozone layer, the changing and unpredictable weather patterns causing droughts in Asia, flooding in America, melting of the Arctic and depletion of nature's vast resources of food is what has come to be known as climate change.

**Table 2: Tokens of *climate change* across the corpus**

|   |              |           |
|---|--------------|-----------|
| 1 | ENV1         | 23        |
| 2 | ENV2         | 3         |
| 3 | ENV3         | 3         |
| 4 | ENV4         | 1         |
| 5 | ENV5         | 17        |
| 6 | ENV8         | 18        |
| 7 | ENV9         | 1         |
| 8 | ENV10        | 9         |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>75</b> |

**Figure 2: Concordance Query on *climate change***

Concordance list (unsaved)

File Edit View Compute Settings Windows Help

| N  | Concordance   | Set | Tag | Word | # Sent | Sent Para | H...  | H...  | Sect | Sect | File |                         |
|----|---|-----|-----|------|--------|-----------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-------------------------|
|    |   |     |     |      | # Pos  | # Pos     | # Pos | # Pos |      |      |      |                         |
| 1  | year for the last four years, Lagos has hosted a Climate Change Summit to discuss the effects of      |     |     |      | 25     | 0         | 24    | 0     | 24   | 0    | 24   | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019/Dec  |
| 2  | children in Lagos and indeed Nigeria, know about climate change and how it affects them? Does Iya     |     |     |      | 250    | 7         | 19    | 0     | 249  | 0    | 249  | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019/Dec  |
| 3  | therefore have every reason to be concerned about climate change and the only rational thing to do is |     |     |      | 1,498  | 63        | 11    | 01    | 7    | 01   | 7    | 2 ENV1 20 2019/Dec      |
| 4  | intensity and most recently by human activities. Climate change is one of the most complex,           |     |     |      | 790    | 33        | 2     | 0     | 789  | 0    | 789  | 2 ENV1 20 2019/Dec      |
| 5  | : LAGOS Prevention – Tree planting, Advocacy, Climate Change Club, Change Summit, Parks and           |     |     |      | 1,723  | 54        | 17    | 01    | 2    | 01   | 2    | 4 ENV3 30 SEPT 2019/Dec |
| 6  | and enthusiasm are critical to the fight against climate change. Children possess the power to        |     |     |      | 446    | 19        | 13    | 0     | 445  | 0    | 445  | 9 ENV8 13 JUN 2019/Dec  |
| 7  | of our lives. I must reiterate that the war against climate change is a cause to which every member   |     |     |      | 853    | 41        | 9     | 0     | 852  | 0    | 852  | 9 ENV8 13 JUN 2019/Dec  |
| 8  | of today's event is "The clarion call". Above all, climate change is a clarion call upon humanity to  |     |     |      | 1,584  | 67        | 4     | 01    | 3    | 01   | 3    | 2 ENV1 20 2019/Dec      |
| 9  | just waiting up to the reality of global warming and climate change, and far too many more of us are  |     |     |      | 499    | 17        | 17    | 0     | 498  | 0    | 498  | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019/Dec  |
| 10 | to discuss the effects of global warming and climate change, and proffer solutions. Like the          |     |     |      | 36     | 0         | 35    | 0     | 35   | 0    | 35   | 6 ENV5 10 APR 2019/Dec  |
| 11 | planet because the threat of global warming and climate change is now undebatable. As the former      |     |     |      | 111    | 4         | 21    | 0     | 110  | 0    | 110  | 10 ENV9 14 JUL 2019/Dec |
| 12 | from the scourge of global warming and Climate Change. The Climate Change Clubs we                    |     |     |      | 699    | 26        | 23    | 0     | 698  | 0    | 698  | 3 ENV2 14 JULY 2019/Dec |
| 13 | to children. Recently, we held the 5th annual climate change summit where the participation of        |     |     |      | 474    | 21        | 8     | 0     | 473  | 0    | 473  | 9 ENV8 13 JUN 2019/Dec  |
| 14 | 7th consecutive edition of the Lagos State Annual Climate Change Summit. I am glad that we took the   |     |     |      | 33     | 0         | 32    | 0     | 32   | 0    | 32   | 11 ENV10 21 2019/Dec    |
| 15 | of food is what has come to be known as climate change. In this sense therefore, it is a              |     |     |      | 314    | 6         | 42    | 0     | 313  | 0    | 313  | 4 ENV3 30 SEPT 2019/Dec |
| 16 | today. A global challenge, as unprecedented as climate change, will test humanity's capacity to       |     |     |      | 1,527  | 64        | 8     | 01    | 6    | 01   | 6    | 2 ENV1 20 2019/Dec      |
| 17 | the opposite, severe drought. This is because climate change is causing rain patterns to change.      |     |     |      | 1,306  | 55        | 5     | 01    | 5    | 01   | 5    | 2 ENV1 20 2019/Dec      |

<

concordance collocates plot patterns clusters timeline filenames source text notes

>

75 entries Row 73 0% T S > > vulnerability and Adaptability to Climate Change in Nigeria - Lagos State Transpo

Concordance line 2, taken from ENV5, also describes advocacy as a key element of the campaign against climate change. In an extended series of interrogatives that is meant to set the audience thinking, the Governor probes:

How many more ordinary people – men women and children in Lagos and indeed Nigeria, know about climate change and how it affects them? Does Iya Monday the pure-water seller know that she must encourage her customers to dispose of the sachets properly or return them so they can be recycled so that we can curb flooding? Do our children know that there is a global shortage of water, and that they can conserve water by doing little things such as not letting the water run while they are brushing their teeth? Do we say no, when we are asked if we need a plastic bag in the supermarket, even though that item is going to be used immediately and the bag is going straight into the trash?

As these concordance query results from WordSmith Tools 7.0 show, computer applications can aid Humanities scholarship by helping to spotlight relevant aspects of data. In the data analysis for this paper, there has first been a reliance on the researcher's judgment in identifying the significant clauses and clause complexes before the resort to machine processing of the data that then indicated other insightful aspects of the data. To be sure, in line with the aim of the paper, many other queries may be conducted to further illumine the LSG's perception and response to the environmental crisis. Due to space limitations, however, further queries will not be done at this point.

## **6. Discussions and Conclusion: Implications of an Ecoparadox**

In this paper, nine – often overlapping – discursive strategies have been identified in the 11 selected speeches of Lagos State governor Babatunde Raji Fashola as he addressed the climate change crisis during his tenure between 29 May 2007 and 29 May 2015. One, in the strategy of *governor as acknowledger of anthropogenic climate change*, Mr Fashola explicitly aligns himself with those politicians and business people who argue that human action is damaging the earth's biodiversity. For an administration that appeared to consider itself "liberal", taking this standpoint was significant since the first step to

solving a problem is to acknowledge not only its existence but also its cause. Consequently, the speeches utilised the second strategy of *governor as promoter of green governmentality* to provide an official protocol framework for all action undertaken to reverse human damage to the environment. The Lagos State Government (LSG) under Mr. Fashola thus initiated a couple of policies in this regard.

Three, to present the LSG as a ‘competent knower’, the discursive strategy of *governor as knowledgeable about the environmental crisis* had to feature in the government’s rhetoric. After all, if somebody has deep understanding of a problem, they might be expected to be better able to solve it. Four, there was also the discursive strategy of *governor as problem solver*, which portrayed the LSG as not only knowledgeable about the problem but also *capable* and *willing* to solve it. In taking steps to mitigate the climate change crisis, the LSG also found it necessary to use the fifth discursive strategy of *governor as responsible blame taker on behalf of humankind*, thus allowing the administration to situate its local actions within a global frame. Six, with the strategy of *governor as nature-minded ‘earthophile’*, the LSG’s environmentalist interventions were presented as the handiwork of political actors with *intrinsic* interest in nature, that is, nature *qua* nature. Presumably in contrast to other people or political actors with *extrinsic* interest in nature, then, the LSG sought to construct itself as, for instance, valuing the nonhuman world simply for itself, rather than for instrumental purposes, that is, for what humans can benefit from it.

However, a more critical reading of the speeches reveals the primacy of the seventh strategy of *governor as business-minded ‘earthophile’*, wherein the LSG seems always to have an eye on ‘doing business’ even in the context of ecological action. It is fair to argue that this strategy rather sullies the LSG’s toga of unselfish commitment to total “earth well-being”. And herein lies the ecoparadox in the LSG’s rhetoric within the study period, for it is hard not to see the contradiction in declaring, in one breath, one’s disinterested commitment to the welfare of the nonhuman world, while asserting, in another breath, the need to make profit and achieve economic growth and development as a strictly *human* affair. Even when the Governor shifts from the ideology of *ecocentrism* to that of *conservationism* – in the eighth discursive strategy of *governor as conservationist* – he makes

no bones about his interest in profiting materially from ecological action. This avowal to prioritise human economic interests in fact calls to question the LSG's claims to taking ecocentric action, thus forcing the conclusion that its actions were outright anthropocentric. In the final discursive strategy identified, however – that of *governor as guardian of posterity through visionary action* – the LSG under Mr. Fashola persists in promoting the perception that, in true ecocentric fashion, it is committed to advocating and adopting sustainable environmental practices in the interests of not only the present generation but also future ones.

As the climate crisis deepens, with more powerful political actors in the international system being confronted with the evidence of biodiversity destruction, governments in sub-Saharan Africa will need to move beyond rhetoric and token action as they join the more technologically and industrially advanced parts of the world in sincerely seeking solutions to the environmental crisis. It is quite poignant that Africa—especially sub-Saharan Africa—suffers the most from the climate change crisis even though it contributes the least to pollution via ozone-depleting gases from the manufacturing processes in today's many industries. On this note, it is worth contextualising Middlemiss' (2014) observations on how individualisation interferes with the idea of sustainable development in the thoughts and actions of late-modern individuals who are being encouraged to engage in sustainable consumption and thus ultimately promote the ideal of participation or collective action on the environment. As the analysed speeches show, the LSG under Governor Fashola placed more of the responsibility for environmental action on Lagos residents, urging them to take steps that focused more on saving money than showing intrinsic, genuine care for the nonhuman world. From the perspective of identity discourse as applied to sustainable development, then, the analysed corpus reflects overwhelming governmental stress on the notion that the neoliberal establishment is largely not to blame for today's environmental crisis while the individual should practise more self-denial in their consumptive habits.

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## Appendix

1. There is overwhelming evidence that most of the global warming over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities which have altered the chemical composition of the atmosphere through the buildup of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon monoxide, methane and nitrous oxide. HTH1
2. Today's official launch of the Climate Change Club (CCC) in Lagos State public schools marks another milestone in our journey towards a cleaner, healthier, sustainable and disciplined society. ENV1
3. Today, we are once again fulfilling the pledge of our Administration to institutionalize the tree planting campaign by declaring the 14th of July every year as a tree planting day in Lagos State. ENV2
4. The danger of Global Warming is now a common knowledge with its attendant rise on water bodies – oceans, seas, lagoons, and rivers which have resulted in flood ravaging the globe. ENV2
5. Global warming is caused by emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere thus depleting the ozone layer. ENV2
6. This exercise, designed to strengthen our tree planting advocacy, is part of the various steps taken by this Administration to combat global warming and regenerate the environment for healthy living. ENV2
7. ...we have a duty to preserve nature by planting more trees so that the next generation can get wood for homes, schools, hospitals, furniture, books and so much more. ENV2
8. The challenge we face is coming up with ways of meeting our human needs without continuing to hurt mother earth and endangering our lives in the process. ENV2
9. Our administration will continue to work assiduously to protect the present and future generations from the scourge of global warming and Climate Change. ENV2
10. This exercise is continuous and we shall continue to do everything within the ambit of the law to protect the existing trees and plant more. ENV2
11. Nevertheless it became manifest that even if we cannot fully populate the planet we are, from our far removed locations, collectively endangering the planet. ENV3

12. Of course another positive impact of the tree planting and beautification programme is the almost unquantifiable economic benefit at a micro level that it has unleashed in our State. ENV4
13. Plant a tree a day for cleaner air, plant a tree a day for environmental protection against erosion and flooding, plant a tree a day to create jobs for the unemployed. ENV4
14. Plant a tree for the social, environmental and economic well being of Lagos. ENV4
15. Use less of your air conditioner and bring energy levels down. ENV5
16. We have also initiated our catch-them young policy in our schools by starting an Energy Kids Club in each of the 20 Clubs that win the Governor's Annual Education Award.... ENV6
17. Use energy saving bulbs where you can instead of the ones that burn out quicker and consume more energy. ENV7
18. We should all reuse paper and recycle whenever we can. ENV7
19. We should save water by ensuring your taps are turned off completely after use. ENV7
20. So what we have done is to develop top ten Energy saving tips specifically for children and print posters to be placed in every Lagos State Secondary school. ENV7
21. The whole of Alausa Secretariat and the old Secretariat have been retrofitted with energy saving bulbs and we are already seeing the results of savings to tax payers in how much we pay for electricity. ENV7
22. The climate change club came about as part of our collective global adaptation and mitigation response towards environmental challenges confronting humanity. ENV8
23. I am happy to be the head of a Government that first took very clear and positive action in Nigeria to protect the environment and create parks, gardens and also plant trees. ENV9
24. Our Climate Change Clubs in our schools are targeting and successfully attracting the next generation to sustainable environmental habits that will help them adapt better than we have done. ENV10
25. Our message is simple: conserve energy, save money. ECB10